

County of Knox

Ergonomics Program

(Formerly Video Display Terminal Program)



County Administrative Offices
62 Union Street
Rockland, Maine 04841

Approved by Safety Committee November 3, 2005
Approved by Commissioners November 8, 2005
Revised by Safety Committee May 16, 2013
Reviewed by Safety Committee January 21, 2016
Revised by Safety Committee May 19, 2016

Ergonomics Written Program

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to establish an ergonomics program for the County of Knox.

This program applies to all employees who are required to perform by repeating the same movement or by lifting, carrying, or pushing things.

Goal

The goal of this program is to reduce work-related musculoskeletal disorders developed by workers when a major part of their jobs involve reaching, bending over, lifting heavy objects, using continuous force, working with vibrating equipment and doing repetitive motions.

Definitions

Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTD): The wear and tear on tendons, muscles and sensitive nerve tissue caused by continuous use over an extended period of time.

Ergonomics: The science that seeks to adapt work or working conditions to fit the worker.

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs): MSDs are injuries and illnesses that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints or spinal discs.

Responsibilities

Each department head shall serve as the *Program Administrator* in each county office. This person is responsible for:

- Issuing and administering this program.
- Providing training to employees on ergonomics.
- Compiling the training records of all employees included in the training sessions, and forwarding those records to the County Administrator for inclusion in each employee's training record (personnel file).
- Providing managers and supervisors with a Workstation Setup Evaluation Form to assess their employees' work areas for ergonomic hazards.

The Maintenance Department is responsible for:

- Making changes in workstations to support employee needs.
- Installing and adjusting furniture and/or workstations to support the company's ergonomics program.

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- Encouraging employees to vary work tasks.
- Supporting and encouraging stretching at the workstation throughout the day.
- Evaluating workstations and making recommendations for changes.
- Recognizing ergonomic hazards within the department.

- Recognizing symptoms of CTD and MSD and initiating prompt medical attention.
- Encouraging early reporting of MSDs, their signs and symptoms, and MSD hazards.

Employees are responsible for:

- Adjusting their workstations to fit their work needs.
- Varying their work tasks throughout the day.
- Stretching at their workstations throughout the day.
- Reporting symptoms of CTD and MSDs to their supervisors.

Program Activities

General

- The County will provide equipment that supports good ergonomic design in the office.
- Employees will be involved in the work planning process to identify and find solutions for work process problems.
- Jobs, which contain repetitive motions, will be modified to reduce stress and strain on the body.
- Job rotation will be used to involve multiple muscle groups throughout the day.
- Time will be provided to employees to stretch at their workstations periodically throughout the day.
- Workstations should be evaluated by an outside agency every 3 years. Workstations will be evaluated annually (within one year for new hires), and low-cost changes will be made immediately. Changes which affect capital expenditures for office equipment will be evaluated and implemented as soon as is practical.
- Employees will be encouraged to vary their work tasks throughout the day.
- Employees with CTD will receive appropriate medical treatment.
- Employees with MSD will receive appropriate medical treatment.
- Injured employees returning to work will be given alternative tasks consistent with the health care provider's recommendations whenever possible.
- Initial ergonomics training will be provided each employee, supervisor, or department head as required, with follow-up training annually.

Attachments

Record keeping

- Workstation Setup Evaluation Form
- Non-Mandatory Appendix A to §1910.900: What You Need To Know About Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)
- Non-Mandatory Appendix B to §1910.900: Summary of the OSHA Ergonomics Program Standard

Workstation Setup Evaluation Form

Head

	Yes	No	N/A
Is the employee's head directly over the shoulders?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the employee's head face straight ahead?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the employee have to look down to see his or her work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the employee is reading or writing, is his or her work tilted up to prevent the head from tipping forward?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If the employee is performing data entry, is the document directly in front of him or her?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Neck

Does the employee cradle a telephone on his or her shoulder?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the employee's head tipped forward?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the monitor at a height that keeps the employee's neck in a neutral position?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the employee use bifocals or trifocals and tip his or her head back to focus?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Shoulders

Are the employee's shoulders relaxed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the employee's upper arms next to the body?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the employee have to reach for materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the employee have to reach to operate equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the work surface at the correct height for the employee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Back

Does the chair provide good support to the employee's low back?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the chair adjustable and is it adjusted to support the employee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the employee have to stand at a low work surface, which causes him or her to bend forward?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the employee have to move heavy materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Arms and Wrists

Are the employee's forearms and wrists in a neutral position?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the keyboard at the correct height and angle for the employee?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the employee's arms supported by either a wrist rest or by the arms of the chair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the arm supported when using a mouse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Legs and Feet

Are the employee's feet flat on the floor or on a footrest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there clearance under the work surface for the employee's legs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the chair put pressure on the back of the employee's lower leg?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Eyes

- Is the monitor at a comfortable viewing distance of 18 to 30 inches?
- Are the brightness and contrast controls set for comfortable viewing?
- Is the screen clean?
- Is the employee's eyeglass prescription up to date?
- Is there reflected glare on the screen or on surrounding flat surfaces?
- Is there direct glare from windows or bright light fixtures?
- Are ventilation ducts directed at the employee, which may result in dry eyes?
- If the employee uses a copyholder, is it placed next to the monitor and at the same distance away as the screen?

Work Methods

- Does this employee vary tasks throughout the day?
- Does the employee do some work standing as well as sitting?
- Is there an opportunity to rotate tasks with other employees to use different muscle groups?
- Does the employee take periodic breaks throughout the day to stretch?
- Does the employee know how to adjust the workstation to fit his or her body?
- Is the workstation adjusted properly?

Department: _____

Employee

Evaluator

Date

Comments:

Non-Mandatory Appendix A to § 1910.900
What You Need To Know About Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs)

Ergonomics is the science of fitting jobs to the people who work in them. The goal of an ergonomics program is to reduce work-related Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) developed by workers when a major part of their jobs involve reaching, bending over, lifting heavy objects, using continuous force, working with vibrating equipment and doing repetitive motions.

What are signs and symptoms of MSDs that you should watch out for?

Workers suffering from MSDs may experience less strength for gripping, less range of motion, loss of muscle function and inability to do everyday tasks. Common symptoms include:

Painful joints

Pain, tingling or numbness in hands or feet

Shooting or stabbing pains in arms or legs

Swelling or inflammation

Burning Sensation

Pain in wrists, shoulders, forearms, knees

Fingers or toes turning white

Back or neck pain

Stiffness

What are MSDs?

MSDs are injuries and illnesses that affect muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints or spinal discs. Your doctor might tell you that you have one of the following common MSDs.

Carpal tunnel syndrome

Trigger finger

Tendonitis

Herniated spinal disc

Tension neck syndrome

Rotator cuff syndrome

Sciatica

Raynaud's phenomenon

Low back pain

DeQuervain's disease

Epicondylitis

Carpet layers' knee

Hand-arm Vibration Syndrome

If you have signs or symptoms of MSDs...

If MSD signs and symptoms are not reported early, permanent disability may result. It is important that you report MSD signs and symptoms right away to avoid long-lasting problems. Your employer is required to respond promptly to those reports. Contact the following person to report MSDs, MSD signs or symptoms or MSD hazards:

_____ Name

_____ Phone

What causes MSDs?

Workplace MSDs are caused by exposure to the following risk factors:

Repetition: Doing the same motions over and over again places stress on the muscles and tendons. The severity of risk depends on how often the action is repeated, the speed of the movement, the number of muscles involved and the required force.

Forceful Exertions: Force is the amount of physical effort required to perform a task (such as heavy lifting) or to maintain control of equipment or tools. The amount of force depends on the type of grip, the weight of an object, body posture, the type of activity and the duration of the task.

Awkward Postures: Posture is the position your body is in and affects muscle groups that are involved in physical activity. Awkward postures include repeated or prolonged reaching, twisting, bending, kneeling, squatting, working overhead with your hands or arms, or holding fixed positions.

Contact Stress: Pressing the body against a hard or sharp edge can result in placing too much pressure on nerves, tendons and blood vessels. For example, using the palm of your hand as a hammer can increase your risk of suffering an MSD.

Vibration: Operating vibrating tools such as sanders, grinders, chippers, routers, drills and other saws can lead to nerve damage.

What is the OSHA Ergonomics Standard?

OSHA's standard requires employers to respond to employee reports of work-related MSDs or signs and symptoms of MSDs that last seven days after you report them. If your employer determines that your MSD, or MSD signs or symptoms, can be connected to your job, your employer must provide you with an opportunity to contact a health care professional and receive work restrictions, if necessary. Your wages and benefits must be protected for a period of time while on light duty or temporarily off work to recover. Your employer must analyze the job and if MSD hazards are found, must take steps to reduce those hazards.

Your employer is required to make available a summary of the OSHA ergonomics standard. The full standard can be found at <http://www.osha.gov>.

- **Talk to your supervisor or other responsible persons about your suggestions on how to fix the problem.**
- **Your employer may not discriminate against you for reporting MSDs, MSD signs or symptoms or MSD hazards. Your employer may not have policies that discourage such reporting.**

Non-Mandatory Appendix B to § 1910.900

Summary of the OSHA Ergonomics Program Standard

1. *Why did OSHA issue an Ergonomics Program Standard?*

OSHA has issued an ergonomics standard to reduce musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) developed by workers whose jobs involve repetitive motions, force, awkward postures, contact stress and vibration. The principle behind ergonomics is that by fitting the job to the worker through adjusting a workstation, rotating between jobs or using mechanical assists, MSDs can be reduced and ultimately eliminated.

2. *Who is covered by the standard?*

All general industry employers are required to abide by the rule. The standard does not apply to employers whose primary operations are covered by OSHA's construction, maritime or agricultural standards, or employers who operate a railroad.

3. *What does the rule require employers to do?*

The rule requires employers to inform workers about common MSDs, MSD signs and symptoms and the importance of early reporting. When a worker reports signs or symptoms of an MSD the employer must determine whether the injury meets the definition of an MSD incident – a work-related MSD that requires medical treatment beyond first aid, assignment to a light duty job or temporary removal from work to recover, or work-related MSD signs or MSD symptoms that last for seven or more consecutive days.

If it is an MSD Incident, the employer must check the job, using a Basic Screening Tool to determine whether the job exposes the worker to risk factors that could trigger MSD problems. The rule provides a Basic Screening Tool that identifies risk factors that could lead to MSD hazards. If the risk factors on the job meet the levels of exposure in the Basic Screening Tool, then the job will have met the standard's Action Trigger.

4. *What happens when the worker's job meets the standard's Action Trigger?*

If the job meets the action Trigger, the employer must implement the following program elements:

A. **Management Leadership and Employee Participation:** The employer must set up an MSD reporting and response system and ergonomics program and provide supervisors with the responsibility and resources to run the program. The employer must also assure that policies encourage and do not discourage employee participation in the program, or the reporting of MSDs, MSD signs and symptoms, and MSD hazards.

Employees and their representatives must have ways to report MSDs, MSD signs and symptoms and MSD hazards

in the workplace, and receive prompt responses to those reports. Employees must also be given the opportunity to participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the ergonomics program.

B. **Job Hazard Analysis and Control:** If a job meets the Action Trigger, the employer must conduct a job hazard analysis to determine whether MSD hazards exist in the job. If hazards are found, the employer must implement control measures to reduce the hazards. Employees must be involved in the identification and control of hazards.

C. **Training:** The employer must provide training to employees in jobs that meet the Action Trigger, their supervisors or team leaders and other employees involved in setting up and managing your ergonomics program.

D. **MSD Management:** Employees must be provided, at no cost, with prompt access to a Health Care Professional (HCP), evaluation and follow-up of an MSD incident, and any temporary work restrictions that the employer or the HCP determine to be necessary. Temporary work restrictions include limitations on the work activities of the employee in his or her current job, transfer of the employee to a temporary alternative duty job, or temporary removal from work.

E. **Work Restriction Protection:** Employers must provide Work Restriction Protection (WRP) to employees who receive temporary work restrictions. This means maintaining 100% of earnings and full benefits for employees who receive limitations on the work activities in their current job or transfer to a temporary alternative duty job, and 90% of earnings and full benefits to employees who are removed from work. WRP is good for 90 days, or until the employee is able to safely return to the job, or until an HCP determines that the employee is too disabled to ever return to the job, whichever comes first.

F. **Second Opinion:** The standard also contains a process permitting the employee to use his or her own HCP as well as the employer's HCP to determine whether work restrictions are required. A third HCP may be chosen by the employee and the employer if the first two disagree.

G. **Program Evaluation:** The employer must evaluate the ergonomics program to make sure it is effective. The employer must ask employees what they think of it, check to see if hazards are being addressed, and make any necessary changes.

H. **Recordkeeping:** Employers with 11 or more employees, including part-time employees, must keep written or electronic records of employee reports of MSDs, MSD signs and symptoms and MSD hazards, responses to such reports, job hazard analyses, hazard control measures, ergonomics program evaluations, and records of work restrictions and the HCP's written opinions. Employees and their representatives must be provided access to these records.

I. **Dates:** Employers must begin to distribute information, and receive and respond to employee reports by October 15, 2001. Employers must implement permanent controls by November 14, 2004 or two years following determination that a job meets the Action Trigger, whichever comes later. Initial controls must be implemented within 90 days after the employer determines that the job meets the Action Trigger. Other obligations are triggered by the employer's determination that the job has met the Action Trigger.

5. *Flexibility features of the Ergonomics Program Standard:*

A. Employers whose workers have experienced a few isolated MSDs may be able to use the "Quick Fix" option to reduce hazards and avoid implementing many parts of the program.

B. Employers who already have ergonomics programs may be able to "grandfather" existing programs.

C. The employer may discontinue parts of the program under certain conditions.

The full OSHA Ergonomics Standard can be found at <http://www.osha.gov>.